

What are perfins worth on the open market?

Commercial auction offerings may not give you a clue!

Perfins are being offered more and more in commercial auctions, both by mail and through on-line services. Unfortunately, all too many of these auction firms don't know a thing about perfins. They often "estimate the value" of perfins on the basis of the stamps involved—thinking, perhaps, that collectors who can't afford a copy of a high value stamp they need for their collections will pay a percentage of catalog for a perfin to fill the spot.

Fortunately, many of these perfins don't get any bids, but some do sell for higher than normal prices.

any bidders. When the editor questioned the seller about the reserve, he was told the price was based on "recent auction sales." We're still a little baffled about why this block would be worth that kind of money.

Jacob Kisner (#2168) reports that a lot in a Canadian auction in August suggests that perfins have finally come full circle—from "worthless" to "priceless." Lot 338 in that auction is listed as "Cigar box crammed with used U.S. stamps, close to one pound, mostly from the late 1800s to 1930s, quite strong in Washington Franklin material—(and here is the clincher, says Jack!)—I also note a number of perfins and precancels, a fascinating virgin lot full of possibilities." The estimated value? \$450 Canadian! Jack's

sheets at \$1.75 each mint or used and assigns the same price to the sheets with the A99 perfin.

However, perfined sheets have been showing up on Internet auctions with starting bids ranging from \$20 to \$49.95. A pair of the sheets did sell at \$20 but other offers have gone begging.

Australian perfins guru John Mathews says the A99 perfin sheets are causing considerable confusion in Australia, with the asking price there varying from \$20 to \$200.

There were only 15,000 sets of the sheets perforated, but be-



In recent weeks we have noted a D.S. pattern from Luxembourg on cover sell on an eBay auction for \$103.49 and a Cuban postal card perforated with the numeral one sell for \$49.95.

We've also seen repeated unsuccessful attempts to sell a MNH block of four of Great Britain Scott 160 with the ONT/GOV perfin. The block first went on the auction with a reserve of \$95 and when it didn't sell, it showed up again with a reserve of \$85, where it again failed to attract

further comment: "Undoubtedly, the 50 or 60 perfins in the box account for one half the value of the lot!"

For the World Philatelic Exhibition in Melbourne earlier this year, Australia Post produced two miniature sheets in both perforated and imperforate versions. In addition, Australia Post built a perforating machine so visitors to the show could perforate the sheets with the perfin A99.

So what is a set of the sheets with the A99 perfin worth?

Scott (in the July *Scott Stamp Monthly*) values the



cause visitors to the show could perforate their own, a number of varieties exist—upside down, back to front, and so forth. Some of these varieties are being sold as "rare" at inflated prices. Chances are that forgeries either already exist or will exist soon if the price of the sheets increases much.

Just what the perfined sheets are worth remains open right now. Speculators have leaped into the market in hopes of making a big profit.

If you feel compelled to add the sheet to your collection, use caution and pay only what you personally feel comfortable paying.